

THEORIES OF THE STATE: PERSPECTIVES ON THE NIGERIAN VARIANT

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Abstract

It is difficult to do away with *the State* as a concept in the study of politics. Political thinkers are usually concerned with what constitutes the end of the State, which is the basis of moral philosophy. This paper therefore acquaints us with the diverse theories and perspectives on the State so as to provide valuable insights for dealing with public affairs and politics in any society. Specifically, the Paper carefully examines the theories of the State in their diverse perspectives with a view to linking them (the theories) with the practical reality in the Nigerian variant of State and politics so as to equip us with valuable insights for dealing with politics and public affairs in Nigeria. Using mainly secondary sources of data, the major findings of this paper are that in Nigeria, the State has continued to inherit public policies for national development from the International Capitalist system and thus continues to deny its citizens the right to basic amenities of life for socio-economic development. The Nigerian variant of State and politics is therefore incapable, hence, incapacitated in ensuring 'good life' for its citizens as the chief end of the State. This Paper recommends for a "basic needs approach" as the chief and basic end of the State and Politics in Nigeria. Invariably, the chief and basic end of the State and politics in Nigeria and other Third World Countries should be focused on the basic needs of the citizenry, in which the desire to provide infrastructural facilities like pipe-borne water supply; good, quality and durable roads network; constant and regular electricity supply; adequate, quality and affordable housing facilities, quality and affordable health care delivery services and improved access to quality and affordable educational services, etc, should be the chief concerns of the State (Nigeria) in concrete terms. The State in Nigeria must therefore operate a rule or an ideology with which to tackle its concrete operational responsibilities. Implicitly, government in the *Nigerian Variant* of

State and politics must not only be philosophical but also be realistic in dealing with policies and public affairs to ensure *good life* for the generality of the citizenry.

Keywords: The State, Theory, Politics, Nigeria

1.1 Introduction

Political thinkers have, up to the first half of Twentieth Century, principally shown concerns in the phenomenon of the State, its evolution, organization and purpose (Vermani, 2005:60). Several political writers and schools of thought have developed ideas about the nature and purpose of the State according to different points of view. Thus, as pointed out by Gauba (2003:175), “when new ideas appeared, old ideas were criticized or modified”. In the realm of political philosophy, unlike the natural sciences (such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology), it is not necessary that old ideas be dead before the new ideas become acceptable because the old and new principles of political theory exist simultaneously, claiming their rightful place. None of the theories can therefore claim absolute authority or validity over another, hence, their merits and demerits need constant examination before arriving at any consistent conclusions.

According to Gauba (2003), an acquaintance with the diverse theories and perspectives on the State would equip one with valuable insights for dealing with public affairs in any society. It is in this direction that this Paper carefully examines the theories of the State in their diverse perspectives with a view to linking them (the theories of the State) with the practical reality in the Nigerian variant of State and politics. This, of course, is aimed at equipping us with valuable insights for dealing with public affairs in the Nigerian State and politics.

Systematically, this paper is sub-divided into six different parts. In addition to the introduction, the next segments of the paper examine the theoretical extrapolations and postulations on conceptions of the State; emergence of the State, purpose or functions of the State. Meanwhile, the final segment looks at the empirical and concrete perspectives on the Nigerian variant of State and politics. The paper ends with conclusion and policy recommendations.

1.2 Theoretical And Conceptual Frameworks On The State

There is no single universally acceptable definition of the State. Scholars from the two major ideological strands of Liberalism and Marxism have neither agreed on a universal definition of the concept of State. Even within these major conceptions (Liberalism and Marxism), different authors perceive the State not exactly as the other (Shaapera, 2009:20).

Liberal theorizing on the State, as a concept, contends that the State is a political organization of human society that comprises organized attributes of contemporary institutions like the legislature, executive and judiciary, with respective roles. These are governmental institutions that make and enforce laws that are binding upon the people within a defined geographical territory. These laws, rules or regulations determine the basis of the supreme authority in the land (George-Genyi, 2005). Thus, Mahajan (2000:133) traces the origin of the authority of State to Marchiavelli who expressed the idea as “the Power which has authority over men”. Marx Webber captures the State, further, as “that authority which gives order to all but receives from none”. It is the State, therefore, that provides the structures through which people and resources in a society are organized and policy and priorities established (George-Genyi, 2005).

The foregoing arguments show, from the liberal point of view, that the State has a central role to play in any economy. The operational capacity of the State in an economy, for liberal scholars like Smith (1937), Dahl (1965) and others, depends on the skills and loyalty of the citizens and the revenue available to the system. Liberal scholarship therefore sees the State as an institution for orderly progress of the society and an embodiment of justice for all, not just for a few (Bourgeois class). Liberal scholars regard the State as a neutral arbiter in the contending social classes in the society. This, for George-Genyi (2005), is obviously to curtail the situation described by Hobbes’ “State of Nature”, where the strong prevailed over the weak in a society and most often caused societal anarchy. Man sought to overcome this near anarchy situation of life by seeking security and self preservation of life through the establishment of social contract, which is the State.

Marx initially buttressed that the State is an embodiment of law and freedom; that the State represents the general view of the society (Marx and Engels, 1975). The point of departure from the Liberal theorizing on the State occurred when Marx and Engels jointly expressed in the “Manifesto of the Communist Party” that “the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”, mostly at the expense of the poor (Marx and Engels, 1975:37).

Classical Marxist' View of the State therefore shows that it is an institution with established apparatuses purposely and directly meant to defend and maintain a class domination and class exploitation. Thus, the control of the State apparatuses by the ruling elites is for, and in the whole interest of the bourgeoisie (Abbass, 1990; Shaapera, 2009 and Abbass, 2010).

For Milibrand and Saville (1965), both the economic and political powers of the State are merely the organized power of one class for the oppression of another. Lenin (1945:29) further views the State as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Thus, Engels (1975) sees the capitalist State as where the means of production and other things exist in the private ownership, where both the working class and the peasants are into all or complete subjugation by the propertied class. Meanwhile, the idea of 'democracy', universal suffrage, parliament, elections, policy measures, the fight for national unity and security, etc, are only presented or constituted in a disguise and invariably do not alter an iota of the essential character of the State in being oriented, controlled and directed by the ruling class, purposely used to dominate the other classes in the State (Abbass, 2010).

For the Marxian Scholars, therefore, the development of the productive forces in the capitalist society produced surplus value and thus the appropriation of property for private use that necessitated the constitution of the State. It is this State that, Marxist Scholars argue, becomes an instrument in the hands of the powerful dominant class for accumulation and exploitation of the dominated members of the society. This kind of State, Hembe (2003:38) and Fadahunsi (1988) argue, is an organ of exploitation and is not capable of pursuing policies, or invariably politics, that would promote the interest of all. According to Alavi (1979), because of the absence of a fully developed indigenous class, the State (mostly in under-developed economies) has largely remained an instrument of the ruling class in the promotion of capitalist accumulation under the pretext of national development. Public policy is thus determined by International Finance Capital, using the local bourgeoisie in its formulation and implementation in the national economy (George-Genyi, 2005).

Nevertheless, the classical Marxists equally admit that the State sometimes enjoys relative autonomy and becomes 'independent' from and superior to all social classes as the dominant force in the society rather than instrument of the dominant class.

(Paulantzas, 1969, 1973, 1975 and 1981). This view (relative autonomy nature of the State), therefore, according to Hegel (1982), presents the State as a complete embodiment of the

general interests of the whole society as the State stands over and above particular vested interests and consequently appears ‘independent’, neutral or autonomous of the ruling class.

The question, however, is as to how autonomous or free is the State in choosing its policies in a class-divided society with already established vested economic, political, ethnic, religious and social interests which are completely interrelated and interconnected? It is this problematic of the ambiguity in the relative autonomy of modern States that some scholars of Political Economy (Abbass, 1990:13) suggest a prior understanding of what the crucial functions of the State apparatuses or structures are meant to serve and are capable of maintaining in the delicate and contradictory balances of political, social and economic relations. For other Political Economists like Dunmoye (2012), the operational process of the State anywhere can only be understood from the Ideology of a State which is expressed in form of rule and authority that find formal operation in the Constitution and jurisprudence of the State. The State Ideology (Rule and Authority) thus points to why the State (such as Nigeria) behaves the way it does in governance, politics, law-making or policy formulations and implementation, etc. The next segments of this paper therefore turn to examine the emergence of the state and the purpose for which the state is meant to serve according to various theoretical postulations before briefly examining the perspectives on the Nigerian variant of State and politics at the concrete level.

1.3 Emergence Of The State: A Theoretical Exposure

Political philosophers of all ages have sought to answer the question as to how the state originates. They have not always agreed on the answer to this fundamental question. Consequently, as buttressed by Anifowose (1999:94), various theoretical explanations concerning the genesis of the state have been invented, such as, among others, the divine theory, the social contact theory, the force theory, the natural theory and the Marxist theory. The searchlight in this paper will now be beamed on these different theoretical explanations on the origin or emergence of the State.

1.3.1 The Divine Theory of State’s Origin

The theory of divine origin of the State outlines the fact that the State has been established by an ordinance of God and so its rulers are divinely ordained and are accountable to no other authority but God (Anifowose, 1999:95). This notion of the divine origin of the State strongly prevailed in the oriental Empires where rulers regarded

themselves as the descendants of God. The early Hebrews, for instance, as shown in Shaapera (2009:24), believed that their government was created by the Lord. The theory of divine origin of leaders was used to support the absolutism of James I of England who, like others of his era, governed absolutely without any accountability to his people. Meanwhile, the divine origin perspective on the State was also strongly adhered to by rulers throughout the middle-ages (Ebenstein, 2000).

However, the divine pretensions of royal absolutism were later challenged by the rising middle classes who advanced the doctrine of popular sovereignty. The divine right was therefore challenged by the writings of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and other British Political thinkers who mostly considered the whole idea of ‘State’ as a *social contract* between the rulers and the ruled (Ebenstein, 2000). The next sub-theme here considers the theoretical position of the social contract theorists on the emergence of the State.

1.3.2 The Social Contract Theory of the State

The theory of the social contract presents the State as a product of the mutual agreement of men, created with a definite purpose to sever certain social needs. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) are regarded as the main exponents of the social contract theory of origin of State. Some later thinkers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), John Rawls (1921-2002) and Robert Nozick (1938) made use of this theory to elaborate their own systems of thought (Gaub, 2003:181).

The social contract theory of the origin of the State implies that men, at a time in history, lived or would have lived without any recognized civil law (ie without the State). This stage or life-pattern of men (when they lived without any form of organized civil law) is described as the ‘state of nature’. The state of nature denotes how men lived or would have lived without the authority of civil law, State or political control. At this stage, there is no industry and no systemic production. Men lived not only close to nature but they had to depend on the bounty of nature for their survival.

As argued in Shaapera (2008:1), “it must be noted... however, that even the social contract theorists themselves have not agreed on how the State came to be from their different analysis of life in the state of nature and what they differently perceived was the state of nature”. They commonly agreed that the State was a social contract after an

unsatisfactory experience in the state of nature. For instance, Thomas Hobbes viewed the contract as being between the people and the constituted authority (State) while Locke says such a contract is “of all with all” but not a contract with government or state. Rousseau supported Locke in this way and emphasized that the contract is designed to provide “collective security”.

Life in the ‘state of nature’, to Hobbes, is a general disposition to war “of every man against every man”, leading to perpetual fear and strife which consequently makes life in Hobbesian ‘state of nature’ to be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”. On the other hand, Lockean ‘state of nature’ is moral and social in character. In it, men have rights and acknowledge duties, just that life in the state of nature (for Locke) is not satisfactory as peace is constantly upset by the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men, which Locke says plagues the ‘state of nature’ by lack of an established settled down law, lack of known and indifferent judge, and the lack of an executive power to enforce just decisions. These, Locke argued, necessitated the formation of a civil society (the State) devoid of the evils and hence the social contract (Murkherjee and Ramaswamy, 1999; Gauba, 2003: Enemu, 1999:74; Appadorai, 1974:27).

For Rousseau too, the State is the result of a contract entered into by men who originally lived in a ‘state of nature’. However, Rousseau emphasizes that there was only one contract called the ‘social pact’ to which government or the State itself was not a party. Individuals surrendered all their rights to the community and therefore, after making the contract, may have only such rights as are allowed to them by the General Will (i.e. Law) (See Appadorai, 1974:26).

Nevertheless, the arguments of the social contract origin of the State have been criticized of being ahistorical by not taking cognizance of history and chronology of events in human lives. The social contract theorists’ arguments of life in the state of nature is therefore criticized of being too idealistic, Utopia and hence unrealistic as history does not tell us when such a social contract itself took place in human existence as well as the epoch of the state of nature.

Though, the theory of the social contract origin of State tries to demonstrate that the State is the product of the WILL of all individuals comprising it (the State) and as instrument of harmonizing the interests of all individuals and all sections of society, it is unfortunately not so in many societies, particularly in modern capitalist societies where some dominant sections or a chosen few are so well-organized and vocal that they become “self-styled

representatives of the will of society, and seek to justify their authority on this ground (Gaub, 2003:189). The theory of social contract, therefore, lacks logical explanations as to the origin of State. It has also been described as ‘bad history, bad logic and bad philosophy’ (Gaub, 2003:188).

1.3.3 The Natural Theory of State’s Origin

According to Anifowose (1999:97), “the natural theory sees the State as coming into being as the result of natural evolution”. For this view, the beginning of government is the result of various factors working through ages, such as kinship, religion, force and political consciousness. The State, therefore has evolved out of complex set of human needs through the ages.

Thus, Aristotle argues that man was, by nature, a political animal. The need for order and security is an ever present factor man knows that he can develop the best of what he is capable only through the State; man outside the State was, naturally, indeed, not a man at all but either a god or a beast. Unlike the notions of the social contract theorists, the natural theory of the States origin, like the force theory, has no provision for citizen’s independence of the government, including the rights of political participation in the affairs of the State. The State assumes unrestricted power over its subjects.

1.3.4 The “Force Theory” of State’s Origin

The force theory holds that the State originated in conquest and coercion. It is the result of the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger. As better captured by Anifowese (1999:96), in the later part of The 29th Century, some German philosophers argued that force was the most characteristic attribute of the State, that ‘might made right’ and that power has its own justification. Hence, it was concerned that physically powerful peoples were the ‘best’ and the State as Power, was superior to other forms of human associations.

The force theory, accordingly, has no respect for the natural rights of the citizens and does not approve of any resistance to the acts of political authority. (See Anifowose, 1999:96).

1.3.5 Marxians’ Perceptions on the Origin of the State

Marxists’ writings of how the State emerged maintain that the State is not a creation for the interest of all, but it originated in conflict situation and operates as a form of

instrument of domination. Scholars here include Karl Marx, Fredrich Engels, V.I Lenin, Mao and Lukas (Anifowose, 1999). These people were great philosophers, revolutionaries and political thinkers who observed that the State neither evolved as a result of agreement, contract nor gradual process. According to Marx, man is not a political animal as Aristotle claimed; rather, man is a social animal. Marx maintained that the forces of production in any given society constitute the basis of all social relationships while the State rests (or is founded) upon economic conditions. Thus, the mode of material production in social life preconditions the general character of socio-political and spiritual processes in the society (Mahajan, 2000).

The Marxists believe, therefore, that the development of the productive forces in the capitalist society produced surplus value and thus the appropriation of property for private use that necessitated the constitution of the State. This State then turns to be an instrument in the hands of a powerful dominant class for accumulation and exploitation of the dominated members of the society.

The implications of the Marxists' arguments on the emergence of the institution of the State, as equally captured vividly in Shaapera (2009:27), is that the fact that the material production in an organized society and the social relations of production necessitated the emergence of the State which rests upon economic conditions and is expected to provide the necessary conditions to improve the living standards of the people in the society.

Unfortunately, however, as earlier noted, Marx maintains that the State's creation is not for the interest of all, but it originates in conflict and operates as a form of instrument of domination. Nevertheless, the Marxists, particularly the classical strand of Marxism, equally acknowledge that the State sometimes enjoys some form of relative autonomy and ensures the goodness of all, not just a few, in a society. Thus, as buttressed by Abbass (1990:18), ... the role of the Capitalist State is that it takes charge of responsibility of the political interests of the whole bourgeoisie and then realizes the functions of the political cohesion and hegemony which the bourgeoisie is incapable to realize. In order to achieve this function, the State assumes a relative autonomy to the bourgeoisie.

What readily comes to mind from the foregoing arguments, considering the fact that the State is not just an instrument of class domination but sometimes enjoys some relative autonomy to function in the interest of all in the society, is the question of what purposes or functions is the state meant to serve. The next segment of this paper does justice to this ambiguity.

1.4 The Purposes Or Functions Of The State

The purpose or end of the State has been a subject of endless debate among political philosophers. The question of what purposes does the State exist to serve has been asked many times in every age since human existence; and as Anifowose (1999:98) rightly concurs, “it is indeed the fundamental question of politics” which seeks to examine whether the State should do certain things or refrain from them. Different answers have been proposed by individuals and groups according to their interests.

For Aristotle, in Anifowose (1999:98), the purpose of the State is ‘to ensure good life’, while Locke postulates that ‘the great and chief end of men uniting into common wealth and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property’ which is expressed as lives, liberties and estates (quoted in Smith, 1776:272).

Smith (1776), therefore, identifies three purposes for which the State exists to include the duty to protect society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies; the duty to protect subjects from injustice, by establishing a system of justice; and the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and institutions that will cater for the well being of the subjects.

Thus, as equally pointed out in Appadorai (1974:40-42), the essence of the State is connotative of the centrality of the State in improving the lives of the generality of the masses in a society under its control. Furthermore, Herbert Spencer, cited in Anifowose (1999:98) and Appadorai (1999:78) posits that the State is nothing but a natural institution for preventing one man from infringing the rights of another.

For Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, the best known exponents of the Utilitarian school of thought, the purpose of the State is to provide the greatest happiness to the greatest number of individuals under its jurisdiction (cited in Shaapera, 2009:29). Similarly, Harold Laski, like John Locke, Adams Smith and Spencer, in Anifowose (1999:98), expresses that the State is not an end itself but merely the means to an end. The State, thus, exists to enable the mass of men to realize social good on the largest possible scale. It exists to enable men to, at least, realize the best in themselves. According to Laski, as cited in Appadorai (1974:40-41), therefore, men can be enabled to realize the best in themselves only if the State provides rights, such as the right to work, right to education, right to basic freedoms of speech, press, association and religion; the right to vote and be voted for, etc.

In the words of Anifowose (1999:99),

Broadly, therefore, we may summarize the purposes and functions of the State as being the establishment of order, protection, provision and secular common welfare and participation in the International State-system

For more clarity, however, the functions of the State may be categorized as essential, service, and business functions of the State.

1.4.1 Essential Functions of the State

As outlined by Anifowose (1999:102), essential functions of the State are those which are necessary to uphold the power and safeguard the existence of the State such as:

- i. The maintenance of such armed forces as are necessary for defence against foreign invasion or domestic violence;
- ii. The maintenance of such police forces as are essential for the suppression of crime and the prosecution of criminals;
- iii. The maintenance of courts for the punishment of offenders, protection of the rights of individuals and settlement of disputes by legal means;
- iv. The maintenance of foreign services for the conduct of relations with other States and
- v. Control of environmental pollution.

1.4.2 Service Functions of the State

The service functions of the State, according to Anofowose (1999:102), include those activities of the State conducive to the attainment of general welfare or other ends of the State. He acknowledges that it is sometimes difficult to determine the exact boundary between these service and essential functions. However, service functions, he further explains, include many activities which might not exist at all, unless the State undertakes them. Among the service functions of the State are:

- i. The care of the poor and the incapacitated;
- ii. Building of roads, railways, canals, docks, bridges, harbours, heavy industries and refineries
- iii. Provision of education, public parks and recreational centers;
- iv. Maintenance of sanitations and hospitals;
- v. The regulation of business and the establishment of basic rules for the conduct of private businesses; and
- vi. Dissemination of information

1.4.3 Business Functions of the State

Business functions of the State, Anifowose (1999:102) observes, are services a State engages in because private capital is unavailable or insufficient; private individuals may, thus, resort to excessive charges if they provide such functions as the following:

- i. Social security;
- ii. Unemployment and workers' compensation;
- iii. Insurance services;
- iv. Protection of bank deposits;
- v. Provision of railways, electricity, telecommunications and postal services etc.

While carrying out these functions and many other ones by the State, the individual is the end (of the State) and the State itself the means. Therefore, as clearly captured by Anifowose (1999:102-103):

The State, acting through its agent...government, is an association specifically created to pursue those ends that will promote the temporal well being or interests of its members. When there is clear evidence that a State is doing its duty... when its actions are in accordance with its purposes, it can always reckon on the willing cooperation and voluntary obedience to laws by its citizens.

The implication of the foregoing arguments to this work is that the purposes, ends or functions of the State embedded in the establishment of order, protections and provision of secular common welfare programmes so as to alleviate poverty in the lives of the citizens and to participate actively in the International State-system. The State, therefore, has a central role to play in policy formulation and implementation in an economy-which are, indeed, expected to cater for the well-being of its citizens (Shaapera, 2009:29).

The problem, however, is the extent to which the State, especially in the developing countries, such as Nigeria, appears autonomous or independent of its colonial antecedents and post-colonial precedence to function for the common welfare of all its citizens rather than a privileged few classes or elites! The issue of State's autonomy has always been a controversial matter in the study of politics which demands a careful attention in the next segment of this paper with specific reference to the perspectives on the relative autonomy and role of the Nigerian State.

1.5 Relative Autonomy Of The State And Perspectives On The Nigerian Variant

According to Alavi (1979:36), the Post-colonial State enjoys not merely the ‘relative autonomy’ that the State under developed capitalism has, but rather has a ‘distinct relative autonomy’ by virtue of its direct and obvious role in the economy and production, and that the State is “able to dispense with the usual mediatory role of policies. This implies that the State in the under-developed social formation is invariably characterized by certain features unique to its under-developed institutions.

Thus, Abbass (1990:26) buttresses that the State in under-developed countries is largely dominated by the petty bourgeoisie: “These characteristics have apparently given the state the mistaken and misleading identity of being ‘independent’ and ‘autonomous’.

Incidentally, Alavi (1979:40) further argues that the post-colonial State is characterized by weak and under-developed bourgeoisie under the metropolitan patronage, with a relatively high developed State apparatuses. As such, a new convergence of interest of the three competing propertied classes, under metropolitan patronage, allows a bureaucratic-military oligarchy to mediate their “competing but no longer contradictory interests and demands”. By this, Alavi further points out that the State acquires a relatively autonomous role and is not simply the instrument of any one of the classes. Therefore, by virtue of its economic roles, the State deploys the economic surplus in the bureaucratically economic activity and directions (Alavi, 1979:40).

The implication of the foregoing argument on the problematic of relative autonomy of the State in under-developed countries is that the States in the Third World Countries, such as Nigeria, are sometimes allowed some measure of relative autonomy to perform their basic functions in the interest of the masses rather than often the instruments in the hands of the dominant groups (elites) to subjugate the dominated poor. And as pointed out by Abbass (1990:27), citing Palmberg (1972), the bourgeoisie therefore, systematically use and rely on the armed forces to constantly police their affairs at the expense of the so-called national interest so as to legitimize or nationalize their basic and invested interests. In the final analysis, the foregoing scenario consequently brings the State back to its actual role as an instrument of class creation and class domination (Abbass, 2010).

1.5.1 The State, Politics and Public Policies in Nigeria

According to Nnoli (1986:183), the economic functions of the State exists in all States, whether bourgeois or proletarian and varies in character with the compositions of the

society and ideology of the ruling class. Thus, the relationship between the State and public policies for economic development is the most fundamental in any society. This, however, depends on the relationship between the character of the State and policies relating to societal progress and development.

In Nigeria, during the colonial period, one of the inherent characteristics of the State was to regiment the external dependence of the colony which was intended to be transformed and transcended into an external domination by those who inherited the Colonial State apparatuses (See Abbass, 1990:70). Thus, the proclamation of *Political Independence* in 1960 with all the accompanying forms of international trappings of nurture capitalism, coupled with other technocratic reformism, accelerated class contradiction rather than resolved them for development.

At independence, the State has been very much incapacitated in providing infrastructural amenities in social and economic angles... because not only were the political leaders dislocated socially and economically from the aspirations of the teeming population, but also such provision of amenities would tamper drastically with their privileges and positions (Abbass, 1990:73).

Nnoli (1986:192) collaborates the foregoing arguments as he observes that the pervasiveness of State activities was inherited by the African ruling classes at Independence; it was reinforced after Independence because the Neo-colonial State was the only avenue through which the African leaders could participate effectively in the major economic processes of their countries. Therefore, the private sector of the economy in the Neo-colonial Africa, according to Nnoli (1986), was dominated by foreign enterprises while the Africans who controlled the political process could and did enter the economic system through the public sector. Thus, Africans (Nigerians inclusive) grew up to depend on the State for most of their welfare activities. This explains their greater reliance on the State for their well-being than that of the advanced capitalist societies.

Accordingly, as captured in Shaapera (2009:36), “the Post-colonial Nigeria State has therefore continued the inherited policies of providing infrastructural facilities for economic development, organizing mineral surveys, supporting agricultural and industrial research institutions and in general, promoting service-oriented policies in the inherent of International Capitalist System”. It is this kind of State that Hembe (2003:38), like Fadahunsi (1988), argues elsewhere in this work that is an organ of exploitation and is not capable of pursuing policies that would promote the interest of all in the Nigerian society.

From the foregoing analysis, it is learnable that the Nigerian variant of State is very much incapable and hence incapacitated in ensuring ‘good life’ for its citizens as the chief end of the State. The implication of this unfortunate scenario, Abbass (2010:110) rightly puts, is that:

As the State (in Nigeria) continues to deny its citizens the right to education, health care delivery services are equally affected. Most Nigerians are automatically denied accessibility to health care. Childhood malnutrition is common in Nigeria because households cannot provide adequate nutrition. This has resulted in an increasing incidence of wasted, taunted, stunted and underweight children. Majority of women (in Nigeria) received no delivery care whatsoever and give births under unbearable and dangerous situations. This has heightened high maternal, high infant and child mortality rates coupled with no access to safe drinking water, leading to bad hygienic and sanitary conditions (Abbass, 2010:110).

1.6 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

It is difficult to do away with the State as a concept in the study of politics. Political theorists are usually concerned with “what constitutes the end of the State”, which is the basis of moral philosophy. The foregoing theoretical extrapolations in this study revealed that the emergence and chief end of the State is to ensure “good life” for a generality of members of the society. Unfortunately, the State, in concrete terms, is often seen, in most cases and in most post-colonial African societies (such as Niigeria), as an instrument in the hands of a privileged few who perpetually dominate, exploit and subjugate the dominated majority of the citizenry. The State, thus, serves the interests of a particular vested class structure rather than the generality of the masses.

Nevertheless, it has also been found that for the State to continuously exist to exploit the exploited, the State sometimes enjoys some form of relative autonomy and assumes responsibility to provide for the wellbeing of the masses. In the third world economies, however, because of their under-developed nature, the State possesses some characteristics that make it to be weak and thus operates under a metropolitan patronage of International Capital; consequently, the State lacks the relative autonomy for auto centric economic development.

In Nigeria, in particular, the State has continued to inherit public policies for national development from the International Capital and thus continues to deny its citizens the right to basic amenities of life for socio-economic development. The Nigerian variant of State is

therefore incapable and hence incapacitated in ensuring ‘good life’ for its citizens as the chief end of the State.

There is need to recommend, therefore, that the chief and basic end of the State and politics in Nigeria and other Third World countries should be focused on the basic needs of the citizenry, in which the desire to provide infrastructural facilities like pipe-borne water supply; good, quality and durable roads network; constant and regular electricity supply; adequate, quality and affordable housing facilities, quality and affordable health care delivery services and improved access to quality and affordable educational services, etc, should be the chief concerns of the State (Nigeria) in concrete terms. The State in Nigeria must therefore operate a rule or an ideology with which to tackle its concrete operational responsibilities. It suffices to say here conclusively that government in the *Nigerian Variant* of State and politics must not only be philosophical but also be realistic in dealing with policies and public affairs to ensure *good life* for the generality of the citizenry.

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